

NEW RESOURCES IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY PIANO MUSIC
AND RICHARD WILSON'S *ECLOGUE* (1974)

Ping-Ting Lan, B.M., M.M.

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APPROVED:

Adam Wodnicki, Major Professor and Chair
Joan Groom-Thornton, Minor Professor
Pamela Paul, Committee Member
Steven Harlos, Committee Member
Thomas Clark, Associate Dean of the College of Music
C. Neal Tate, Dean of the Robert B. Toulouse School of
Graduate Studies

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This dissertation draws some of the innovative composers from the early 1900's to the 1960's into the spotlight to highlight their new musical and pianistic ideas. These composers, including Debussy, Schoenberg, Webern, Bartók, Cowell and others, brought new creative forces into piano music, generating many distinctive features of modern music. The discussion of new resources in harmonic language, timbre, texture, form and concept of time has a direct bearing on aspects of Richard Wilson's *Eclogue* itself as well as aspects of performance problems. American Composer, Richard Wilson, has written three substantial piano solo works, *Eclogue*, *Fixations*, and *Intercalations*. *Eclogue*, from 1974, is a one-movement work. The detailed analysis of *Eclogue* covers aspects of form, harmonic language, timbre and texture, and rhythm and time. In addition, essential issues of performance problems such as notation, rhythmic control, extended techniques, hands distribution, and pedaling are also discussed.

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CHAPTER I

TWENTIETH-CENTURY PIANO RESOURCES

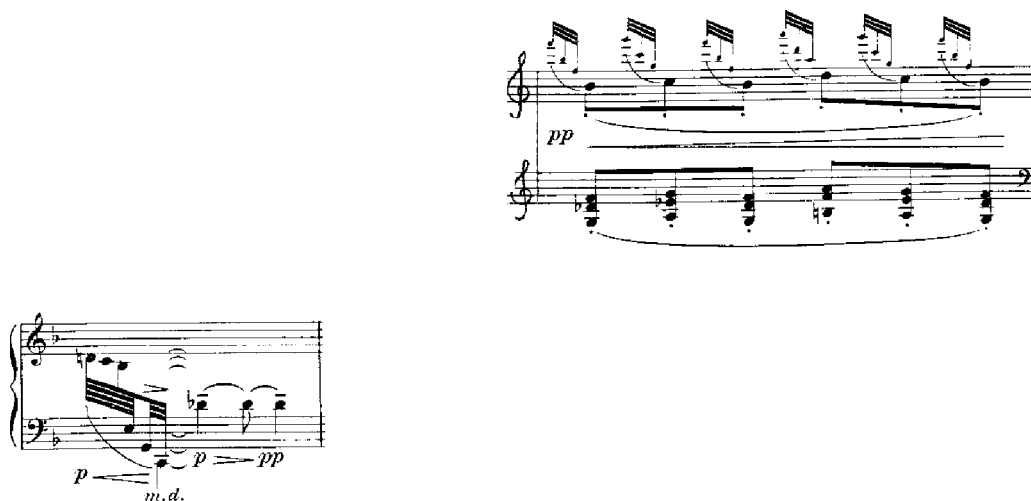
Piano music has played a distinctive and significant role in the development of musical language since the second half of the eighteenth century. Since then composers have conveyed new musical ideas through the piano, capitalizing on its multifariousness and widespread use. The predominance of piano music in the nineteenth century firmly established an incessant influence on the piano composers of the twentieth century. However, the revolution in piano music has never ceased. The piano continues its role as one of the predominant mediums and the composers in the twentieth century put new creative demands into the piano music, generating many distinctive features of modern music. This chapter will draw some of the innovative composers from early 1900's to 1960's into the spotlight to highlight their new musical and pianistic ideas. The discussion will center on issues of harmonic language, timbre, texture, form and concept of time. These issues will have a direct bearing on aspects of Richard Wilson's *Eclogue* itself as well as aspects of performance problems.

Harmonic Language

The dramatic weakening of the hierarchy of tonal harmony after its three-hundred-year flowering stimulated many composers to look for new harmonic systems in the twentieth century. Claude Debussy's revolutionary non-functional harmonic language created a whole new spectrum in piano music. Evident harmonic features of his piano writing that embody the characteristics of Impressionism include his extensive use of parallelism in voice leading and his preference for modes and for the whole-tone scale.

Although Debussy's music does not always reveal a definite tonal center, it never loses its affinity with tonality. However, two novel features of his musical language that differ from the tonal models of the common practice period are his use of chromaticism and of harmonic sonority for its own sake. The functions of chromaticism in Debussy depart greatly from those in Romantic music. In Debussy, chromaticism does not move toward the diatonic tonal structure, but creates sonorities that stand on their own. In a similar fashion, Debussy employs dominant-seventh, leading-tone-seventh, dominant-ninth, and French-augmented-sixth sonorities without engaging their usual functions and resolutions to create harmonic sonorities.¹ An example of this can be found in his piano piece, Etude, No.8, "Pour les agréments":

¹ Richard Parks, The Music of Claude Debussy (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 4-5.

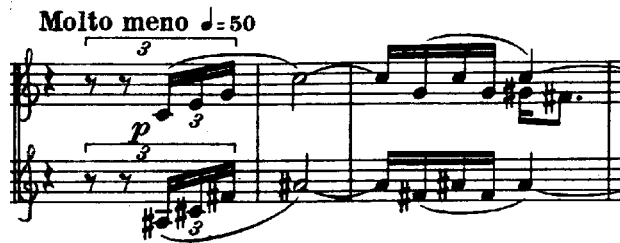


Example 1. Debussy, *Douze études*, “Pour les agréments,” mm. 4-5.

Here the parallel half-diminished seventh chords are used to display sonority rather than to show traditional function.

Debussy’s new approach to harmony resulted in a harmonic system emphasizing colors and acoustical effects which influenced many later composers, including Ravel, Messiaen and Stravinsky.

Igor Stravinsky ventured into writing in two different keys simultaneously, bitonality. This is a means of creating a colorful effect without denying tonality completely. In the fanfare of his “Chez Petrouchka” from *Trois Mouvements de Petrouchka* (1921), the keys of C major and F# major are juxtaposed:



Example 2. Stravinsky, *Trois Mouvements de Petrouchka*, “Chez Petrouchka,” mm. 9-11.

Bitonality was widely used by certain composers including the members of the group “*Les Six*,” and Charles Ives.

A very important pioneer who led harmonic language toward a different horizon in the early twentieth century was Arnold Schoenberg. Schoenberg endeavored to create a new musical language by avoiding common practice progressions and relying on the “emancipation of the dissonance,” as it was subsequently called. Schoenberg asserted that as classically dissonant harmonies become familiar, they can be used as consonances for they cease to sound dissonant. Dissonances and consonances both become equally comprehensible with the emancipation of dissonance.²

Almost all of Schoenberg’s piano works exhibit momentous differences from the norm. Schoenberg’s first composition for the piano, *Three Piano Pieces*, Op. 11 (1908), was also his first work to accomplish the complete dissolution of tonality and marked the

² Martha M. Hyde, *Twelve Tone Harmony* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1977), 2.

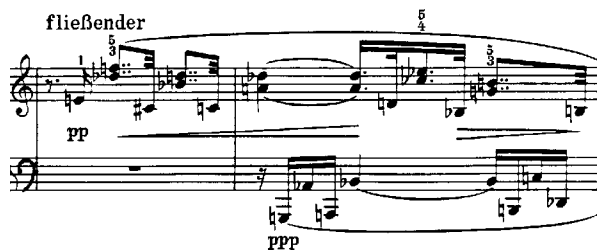
beginning of atonality.³ In his Op.11, No.1, dissonances are treated in ways similar to those in traditional music in terms of the rhythm, but a true “progression” does not exist:



Example 3. Schoenberg, *Three Piano Pieces*, Op. 11, No.1, mm. 1-8.

³ Schoenberg recommended the term “pantonal” in preference to “atonal” to signify the equal relation of all tones to one another.

Chromaticism plays a strong role in this piece. The highly chromatic movements are often complicated by octave displacement, as seen in the example below:



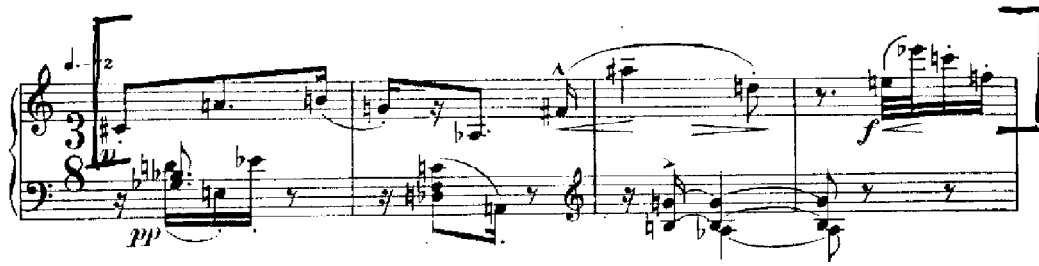
Example 4. Schoenberg, *Three Piano Pieces*, Op.11, No.1, mm. 34-35.

In Op.19 (1911), Schoenberg's concern was with polyphony of the most intense expression. The avoidance of superfluous repetitions, by which the feeling of tonality might be strengthened, is an important component of the development of his style toward twelve-tone serialism.⁴

Schoenberg's new compositional procedure, twelve-tone serialism, was first presented in "Walzer" from Op. 23, *Five Piano Pieces* (1923). In fact, Schoenberg incorporated serial procedures in all of the other four pieces from Op. 23.⁵ The twelve-tone row is stated in the right hand melody in the beginning of *Walzer*:

⁴ Eduard Steuermann, "The piano music of Schoenberg," ed. Merle Armitage, *Schoenberg* (New York: Book For Libraries Press, 1937), 126-127.

⁵ Malcolm MacDonald, *Schoenberg* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1976), 160.



Example 5. Op. 23, *Five Piano Pieces*, No. 5, “Walzer”, mm. 1-4.

In “Walzer”, Schoenberg produced a piece in which no single pitch in the twelve-tone row is repeated and all pitches are equally emphasized. In his later twelve-tone works, his handling of this concept became freer, that is, immediate repetition of some pitches or a reordering of others might be more musically fitting. Generally, the possibilities of the row are seen in four basic forms: prime, inversion, retrograde, and retrograde-inversion.

Schoenberg asserted that each tone in the twelve tone row functions only in relation to its adjacent pitches, thereby subdividing the row into smaller groups called “sets.” The construction of the basic sets relies on a succession of intervals rather than a series of individual pitches. According to Schoenberg, the resultant harmony from the twelve-tone method differs from tonal harmony in two ways. First, a twelve-tone harmonic structure is determined by the succession of intervals in the basic sets, which are composed exclusively for each composition. In traditional harmony, on the other hand, the hierarchy of the tones is predetermined. Second, a twelve-tone harmony is no mere simultaneity or vertical event. A complete musical texture consists of all three elements together, namely,

melody, harmony and rhythm. The harmonic structure of twelve-tone composition reaches unity through one source: the basic sets of the row.⁶

Another composer who attempted to organize all equal-tempered twelve tones into a hierarchy that was still tonal was Paul Hindemith. The comprehensive system he developed was an arithmetical order based on the natural harmonic series. From tonic, he used the first six acoustical harmonics as generators to derive the twelve equal-tempered chromatic notes. The resultant order of these notes, which was referred to as *Series I*, formed a new concept of relationships of tones for Hindemith and became the basis for understanding the connection of tones, chords, harmonic progression, and tonal progress in his compositions.⁷ Hindemith demonstrated his sequence of *Series I* in his piano composition, *Ludus Tonalis* (1942). Each of the twelve fugues represents a different tonal center in the hierarchical order.

Despite the originality of his harmonic language, Hindemith's music exerted little influence on later composers. However, Schoenberg's twelve-tone serialism not only attracted many followers, including Webern, Berg and Dallapiccola, but also influenced composers of later generations, such as Messiaen, to use serial technique.

Oliver Messiaen took a broad conception of tonality from Debussy as his starting point. His individual harmony was developed through a combination of tonality, atonality, modality and serialism. He created a system of scales called *modes of limited transposition*. These modes can be transposed only a limited number of times, due to

⁶ Martha M. Hyde, 2-8.

⁷ Paul Hindemith, The Craft of Musical Composition Book I (New York: Schott Music Corp., 1945), 53-56.

their symmetrical design. For example, the first mode is the whole tone scale, which has two forms(one transposition possible): one beginning on C and one beginning on C#. When starting on the next pitch, D, or on any other pitch, the modes will repeat the pitch content of one of these two forms. Messiaen spoke of the “charm of impossibilities” of the modes of limited transposition which enables his music to possess the atmosphere of several tonalities without being polytonal.⁸ These modes are the main governing factor in Messiaen’s harmonic language, which he used extensively in both vertical and horizontal dimensions. Messiaen utilized mode 2, the equivalent of the octatonic scale, in “Première communion de la Vierge” from *Vingt Regards sur L’Enfant-Jésus* (1944).

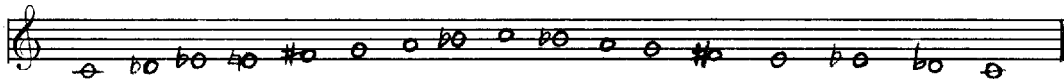


Figure 1. Mode 2.

⁸Olivier Messiaen, The Technique of My Musical Language (Paris: Alphonse Leduc & ie., 1944; Eng. Trans., 1957), 58-63.

In the following excerpt from this piece, all pitches in the left-hand harmony and melody and the right-hand parallel chords are from a transposition of this mode (B-C-D-Eb-F-Gb-Ab-A) :

The image shows a musical score excerpt from Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur L'Enfant-Jésus*. The score is written for piano and features a complex, highly chromatic harmonic language. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The tempo marking is "Plus lent (♩ = 76)". The dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano). A specific instruction reads: "*p* (Rappel de 'la Vierge et l'Enfant')". The score includes a section marked "Rall." (Ritardando). The notation is dense, with many beamed notes and complex chordal structures in both hands.

Example 6. Messiaen, *Vingt Regards sur L'Enfant-Jésus*, "Première communion de la Vierge," mm. 18-20.

In one of the studies from *Quatre études de rythme* (1949-1950), "Mode de valeurs et d'intensités," Messiaen experimented with a new kind of organization originating from serialism. Messiaen assigned a specific duration, attack and register to each pitch from the three twelve-tone modes on which the piece is based. This unprecedented approach had a profound influence on his important pupils, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez, who developed this concept of "total serialism" in their complex piano scores.

Timbre

Timbre is described as “the tonal quality of a sound”⁹. New piano timbres can be achieved in numerous ways, whether through pedal effects or using a prepared piano. Composers for piano music have never been more adventurous in this aspect than in the twentieth century.

In the nineteenth century, Chopin and Liszt were the major composers whose music put new demands on timbre in piano music.¹⁰ Debussy opened a new world in this respect. His creative ways of using pedal effects generated many novel timbres which are unique and idiomatic for the piano. Debussy was very fond of writing chords in extremely spaced registers with a soft dynamic and often at a slow tempo. Such writing can be very striking and perceived as a unique timbre, such as the last chord in the Prelude “Des pas sur la neige” (1910):

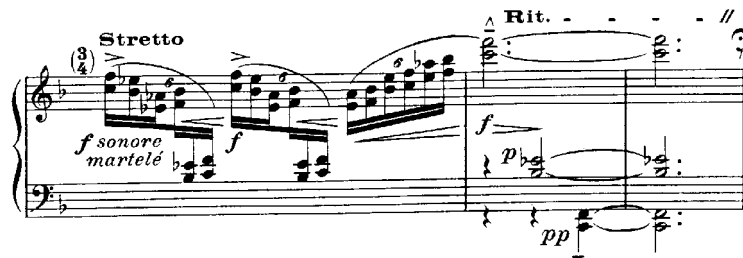


Example 7. *Préludes I*, “Des pas sur la neige,” mm. 34-36.

⁹ John A. Emerson, “Timbre,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie. (London: Macmillan, 1980), XVIII, 823.

¹⁰ It should be noted that Beethoven’s later works also explored novel texture and timbres.

In “pour les quartes” (1915) from Etudes, Debussy specifically indicates the *p* and *pp* dynamics after the *f* attack in the treble register and allows these sonorities to vibrate on pedal:



Example 8. *Douze études*, “pour les quartes,” mm. 7-9.

Another special sound Debussy created is achieved by parallel writing in extreme registers. In his prelude “Brouillards”, the parallel octaves in measures 18-20 produce a distinct timbre that stands out due to the strong contrast with the preceding measures:

Cédez //

The first system of the musical score for 'Brouillards' consists of two staves. The upper staff (treble clef) begins with a half rest, followed by a series of eighth notes and chords. The lower staff (bass clef) features a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *più pp* appears in the lower staff. A double bar line with repeat dots is at the end of the system.

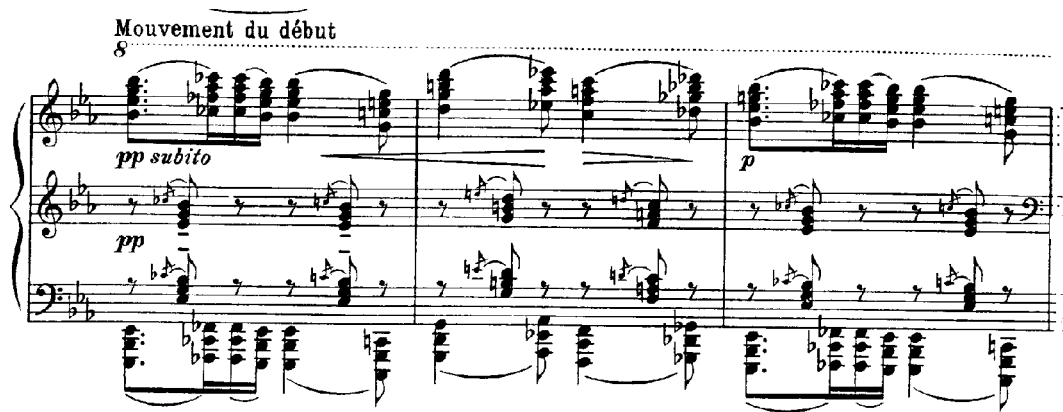
Mouvement

8

The second system of the musical score continues the piece. It features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *pp* is present, along with a crescendo hairpin. The phrase *pp un peu en dehors* is written in the lower staff. A double bar line with repeat dots is at the end of the system.

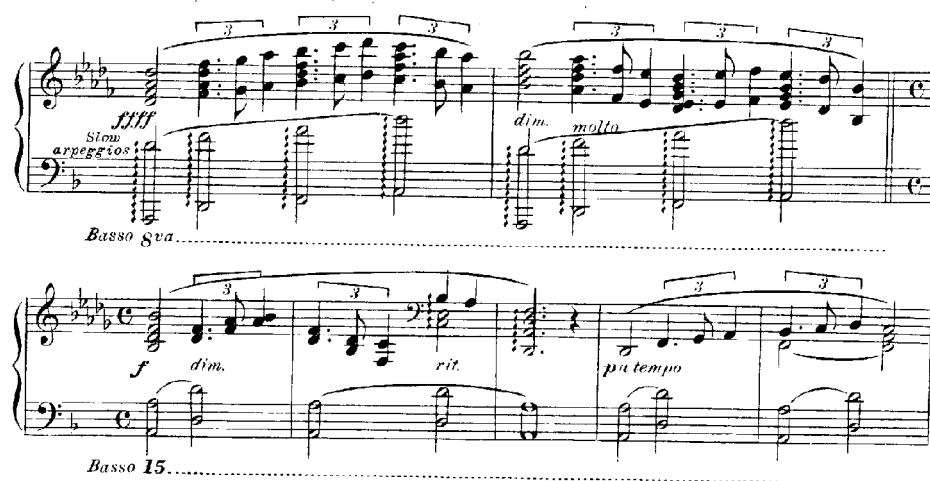
Example 9. *Préludes II*, “Brouillards,” mm. 15-20.

In “La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune”, the parallel chords in the outside voices, which are echoed by the chords in the middle voices, create an archaic choral sonority:



Example 10. *Préludes II*, “La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune,” mm. 25-27.

Henry Cowell was a composer particularly noted for the novelty of timbres in his piano writing. The ‘tone cluster’ first appeared in Cowell’s piano work, *The Tides of Manaunaun* (1912). The clusters are played with the flat palm of the left hand to cover an octave or with the forearm to cover two octaves. The ‘tone clusters’ that accompany a folk-like tune are used for dramatic programmatic effect portraying tremendous tides:



Example 11. Cowell, *The Tides of Manaunaun*, mm.25-29.

The ‘tone cluster’ can be used in both diatonic and semitonal groups. They can be played with the fingers, the fists, the forearm or even a piece of wood.¹¹ Cowell always considered these sounds as chords. His innovation was adopted by many major composers, such as Bartók and Ives. Bartók requested permission from Cowell to use the ‘tone cluster’ in his music.¹² In his “Musiques nocturnes” from the *Out of Doors*, a most ingenious timbre is created by the use of semitone clusters, in which a different note is emphasized with each repetition. Also, the intervals of 2nds and 9ths are used against it in higher registers. The combination of both timbres depicts the landscape of sounds of nature during the night:

¹¹ Ives indicated this procedure in his Second Sonata.

¹² William Austin, *Music in the 20th Century* (New York: Norton, 1966), 440.



Example 12. Bartók, *Out of Doors*, “Musiques nocturnes,” mm. 6-8.

Henry Cowell was also the first to experiment with sounds produced by playing on the strings inside the piano. In *Aeolian Harp* (1923), the sound is produced by sweeping and plucking the strings inside the piano, while silently depressing the keys to lift the dampers. Cowell further developed these extended techniques, including sweeping both across and along the strings with open pedal, specifying the use of the fingernails or the flesh of the fingers to produce various timbres in *The Banshee* (1925). The sound that is produced in this piece is atmospheric, a halo of dark resonance. In *Sinister Resonance* (c.1930), Cowell first utilized the sound produced by striking the keys with one hand while stopping the strings with the other.

Finally, Cowell also introduced the idea of putting various objects inside the piano to produce new timbres. This innovation was further developed by his pupil, John Cage, into the prepared piano technique in works such as his *Bacchanale* (1938), and *Sonatas and Interludes* (1946-48).

The first instance of the use of the piano harmonics appears to be in the last measures of “Paganini” from Schumann’s *Carnaval*, although there is no universal agreement on performance practice in this case. However, they were not commonly used until the twentieth century. Schoenberg originated the notation for the use of harmonics in his Op.11, No.1. He used diamond-shaped note heads to indicate the keys to be depressed silently to generate the harmonics after the fundamental tones are forcefully struck, as seen in the following example:

Die Tasten tonlos niederdrücken! **langsam**

14 *sf* *ohne Ped.*

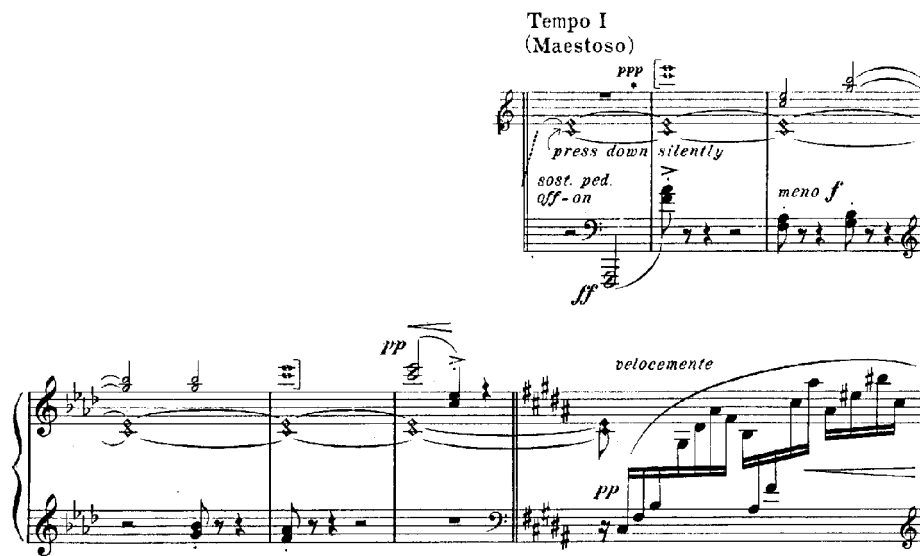
15 *p* *ohne Ped.*

16 *sf* *p* *ohne Ped.*

17 *p* *ohne Ped.*

Example 13. Schoenberg, *Three Piano Pieces*, Op.11, No.1, mm. 14-17.

Elliot Carter skillfully utilized this principle in the first movement of his *Piano Sonata* (1946). He achieved variety by using two sets of fundamental tones, while silently depressing one set of partials common to both struck fundamental sets. Carter indicated the actual sounding pitches of the harmonics with smaller note-heads in brackets:



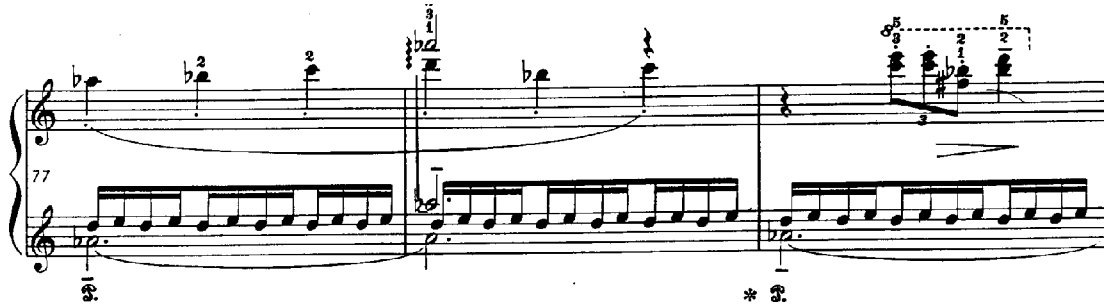
Example 14. Carter, *Piano Sonata*, mm. 123-129.

Cowell's use of harmonics in his work, *Tiger* (1928), was achieved by the same method as that in Schumann's *Carnaval*, by first creating a loud resonance with pedal, then silently depressing a chord whose notes remain ringing when the pedal is lifted.

Texture

The textures in twentieth-century piano music utilize all previous resources and are no longer confined by the structure of tonal voice-leading and counterpoint. Composers in the twentieth century used or combined monophony, homophony and polyphony in their music to create various kinds of textures. Explorations of new possibilities of texture in the twentieth century subsequently led certain composers to give texture a greater importance than pitch and time in structuring a work.¹³

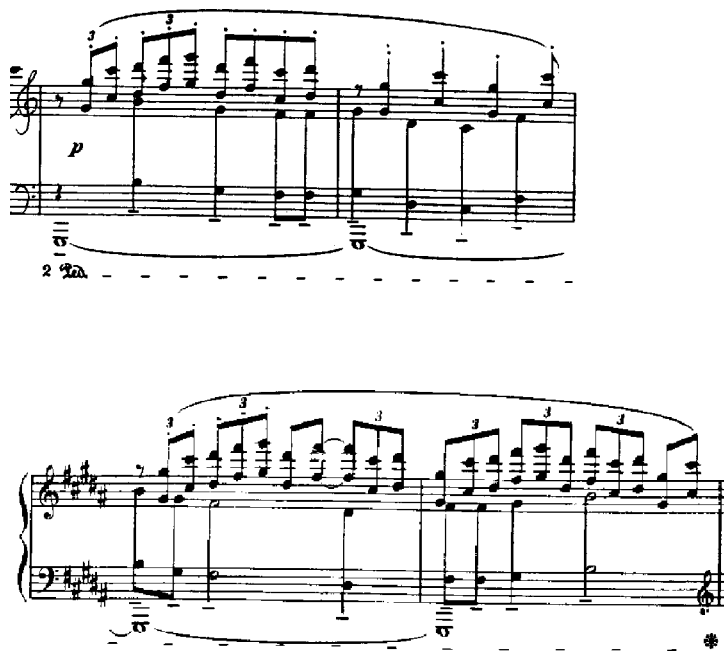
Debussy created a new world in the area of piano texture. In “Prelude” from *Pour le Piano*, a novel layered texture is produced by the trills sounding with the thematic segments and alternating with triplet figures, while bell-like A-flats echo each other in the outer voices:



Example 15. Debussy, *Pour le Piano*, “Prelude,” mm. 77-80.

¹³ Elliot Schwartz and Daniel Godfrey, Music Since 1945: Issues, Material and Literature (New York: Schirmer Books, 1993), 166.

Debussy's new approach that challenged the instrument to break away from the traditional texture can be seen in his piano work, *Estampes*. Following a Far Eastern influence revealed in the "Pagodes" in which a gamelan-like texture is imitated, Debussy created a composite sound texture that dominates the piece. This composite sound is achieved by using a long sustaining bass that is held with the damper pedal, while the upper two voices, doubled at the octave, are integrated by their similar pitches and volume, as seen in the following example:



Example 16. Debussy, *Estampes*, "Pagodes," mm. 11-14.

Debussy also made use of the idiomatic texture of the white-against-black keys in his *Prélude* “Brouillards”:



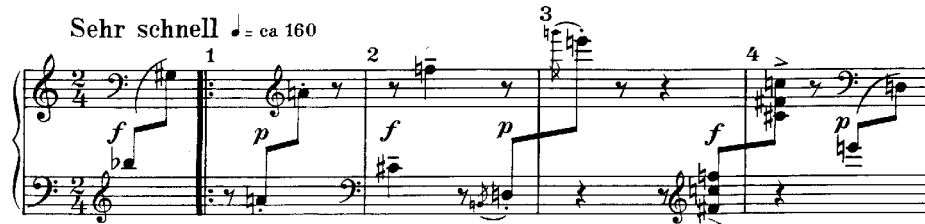
Example 17. Debussy, *Prélude*, “Brouillards,” m. 1.

This kind of writing, which appears again in the opening of his *Prélude* “Feux d’artifice”, generates the type of the atmosphere typical of Impressionism. Many of Debussy’s revolutionary textural ideas exerted much influence and inspired numerous composers to write atmospheric music based on Debussy’s models.

An extremely different concept of texture was conceived by Schoenberg and Webern. Schoenberg’s sparse texture in his *Six Little Piano Pieces*, Op. 19 influenced Webern immensely in his approach to twelve-tone compositions. Schoenberg even avoided octave doublings in multi-part textures in his twelve-tone compositions, because he considered that doublings created an impression of a tonic.¹⁴ Webern relied on this “economic” principle to create a musical fabric woven by a mirror-canon at the

¹⁴ Gary E. Wittlich, “Sets and Ordering Procedures in Twentieth-Century Music” in *Aspects of Twentieth Century Music* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1975, 407.)

distance of an eighth-note throughout the second movement of his twelve-tone piece, *Piano Variations*, Op. 27:



Example 18. Webern, *Piano Variations*, Op. 27, second movement, mm. 1-5.

In this piece, Webern also achieved a novel pianism, in which both hands are equal in producing the fabric of this piece. The traditional differentiated sound texture of right hand and left hand is no longer audible.

In contrast to this spare and transparent approach to texture, some composers discovered means of writing surpassingly dense textures. Charles Ives superimposed conflicting rhythms, tempi and tonalities, generating a strikingly dissonant collage. In the beginning of “Emerson,” from his *Second Sonata*, Ives set several motives together in an exceedingly thick contrapuntal texture:

Slowly

*f**

l.h. *r.h.* *faster* *ff*

f *l.h.* *slightly slower* *ff* *faster* *slower*

mf *f* *faster* *l.h.* *r.h.*

Example 19. Ives, *Second Sonata*, "Emerson," mm. 1-5.

Form

In traditional tonal music, the idea of an absolute tonic and its relationships to other keys is perhaps the main factor which determines the musical form. Without the dynamic concept of tonality, the traditional forms, such as ternary, rondo, and sonata forms somewhat lost their architectonic structures. The variation form also underwent a metamorphosis in the twentieth century. Although factors of the traditional shaping designs were still operative in many cases, the absence of gravitation towards a tonic, along with the rising importance of timbre, texture and other parameters inevitably demanded new forms for the new musical languages.

The most striking form that arose early in the twentieth century was the palindrome. The palindrome is a symmetrical design, in which musical materials are arranged in such a way that they are the same or similar when reversed. This concept can be easily understood in through the following diagram: A B C D C B A. Bartók used palindromic form in his *String Quartet No.5* (1934) for a large-scale connection among all movements. In this five-movement work, Bartók uses thematic material from the first movement in the fifth and similarly relates the second movement to the fourth. Also, in his *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* (1936), this formal device is heard in the opening fugue movement. In Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis*, the prelude and postlude form a palindromic pair; the postlude repeats the prelude in retrograde inversion.

Messiaen followed this formal approach in some of his piano works. In “Par Lui tout a été fait” from *Vingt Regards sur L’Enfant-Jesus* (1944), Messiaen used palindromic form for the first half of this extended piece. Bars 1-61 are repeated exactly in retrograde

in bars 69-129. The arrangement of his *Catalogue D'Oiseaux* (1956-1958) forms a palindrome. The thirteen pieces are divided in seven books as follows:

3, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 3. The center of the palindromic arrangement is the largest piece, “La Rousserole Effarvate”, which depicts the activities of several species of birds during an entire day from midnight to 3:00 a.m. through morning, noon and evening to midnight, and on to 3:00 a. m. the following morning. The entire piece is a large circular palindrome. For example, the music of the sunrise, near the beginning, is repeated to represent the sunset near the end of the piece.

In *Five pieces for piano* (1962), George Crumb integrated all five movements with a palindromic design. Crumb incorporated similar timbres, pitch-cell groups, rhythm and tempo as unifying devices to generate an arch design as seen in the following Figure¹⁵:

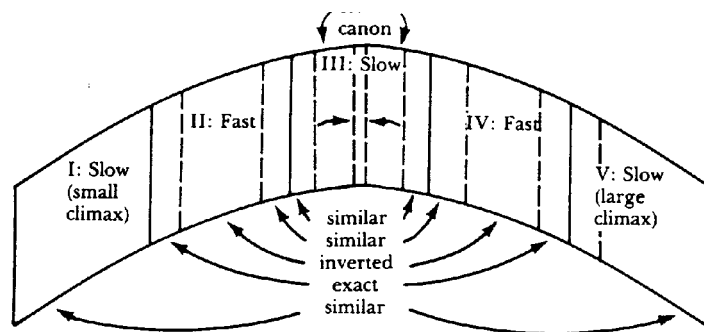


Figure 2. Diagram of Crumb's *Five pieces for piano*.

¹⁵ David Burge, *Twentieth-Century Piano Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), 213.

The main section of the third piece, being the center of the arch, is a crab canon. The second half is a basic repetition of the first, but in reverse order.

Novel techniques of shaping the form were introduced by Igor Stravinsky. The processes such as interpolation and layering produce what is known as block form. His Ballet, *The Rite of Spring* demonstrates this formal approach. This concept of form can often be found in piano works by Olivier Messiaen. In the following example from “Regard de l’Eglise d’amour” from *Vingt Regards sur L’Enfant-Jésus*, the first six bars shows a expansion of two contrasting ideas which are then juxtaposed with the “Theme of God” and followed by ostinato patterns:

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece, likely from Olivier Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur L'Enfant-Jésus*. The score is organized into four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

- System 1:** Labeled "Presque vif (♩=132)". It features two staves. The upper staff has a melodic line with dynamic markings *f*, *ff*, and *f*. The lower staff has a rhythmic accompaniment. Above the staves, there are handwritten notes: "Idea 1" and "Idea 2". A tempo marking "Presque vif (♩=132)" is present. A note "(en gerbe rapide)" is written below the lower staff.
- System 2:** Labeled "Presque lent (♩=60)". It features two staves. The upper staff has a melodic line with dynamic markings *f*, *ff*, and *f*. The lower staff has a rhythmic accompaniment. Above the staves, there are handwritten notes: "Idea 1" and "Idea 2". A tempo marking "Presque lent (♩=60)" is present. A note "(Thème de Dieu)" is written below the lower staff.
- System 3:** Labeled "Vif (♩=112)". It features two staves. The upper staff has a melodic line with dynamic markings *f*, *ff*, and *f*. The lower staff has a rhythmic accompaniment. Above the staves, there are handwritten notes: "Idea 1" and "Idea 2". A tempo marking "Vif (♩=112)" is present. A note "(Thème de Dieu)" is written below the lower staff.
- System 4:** Labeled "Vif (♩=112)". It features two staves. The upper staff has a melodic line with dynamic markings *f*, *ff*, and *f*. The lower staff has a rhythmic accompaniment. Above the staves, there are handwritten notes: "Idea 1" and "Idea 2". A tempo marking "Vif (♩=112)" is present. A note "(Thème de Dieu)" is written below the lower staff.

Example 20. Messiaen, *Vingt Regards sur L'Enfant-Jésus*, "Regard de l'Eglise d'amour" mm. 1-9.

The heavy, static quality of the "Theme of God" is in sharp contrast to the surrounding material, representing a form of juxtaposing known as interpolation. Another form of juxtaposition is layering, in which two or more independent musical entities are sounded simultaneously. In "Regard du Fils sur le Fils," Messiaen used a texture of three layers

with each layer in a different rhythm. The upper two layers play the same isorhythmic pattern, but in different speeds that form the ratio of 3:2, thus forming a juxtaposition in time. The highest layer makes three complete statements of the isorhythmic pattern while the middle layer makes two complete statements of the pattern at its slower speed. Then the patterns begin again together at the same point.

Following a move to abandon the struggle to find new closed forms, many composers after 1950 approached musical structures by using a variety of chance operations, which resulted in open forms with a higher level of participation by the performer. In John Cage's *4' 33''* (1951), only the time span is specified. The materials the composer gives, however, can be much more specific and structured. This is exemplified by the mobile form used in Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XI* (1956) and in Boulez's *Third Piano Sonata* (1958). In both pieces, composers bestowed upon the performers a certain degree of freedom in ordering the fragmentary passages.

Concept of Time

All of the musical parameters discussed above: harmonic language, timbre, texture and form shaped new temporal concepts in twentieth-century music.

Without the tension of functional tonal music and the textural constancy, Debussy's revolutions of harmony and texture reveal a musical time that is more discontinuous, stationary and extended, that is, the linear aspect of time is de-emphasized. Events are appreciated as individual entities with unique characteristics, in which pure sonority prevails.

However, in much atonal music, such as Schoenberg's Op.19, musical time reveals linearity through continuous melodic lines which are clarified by the thin texture, but without strongly directed goals due to the nontonal pitch structure.

Messiaen's approach to time is similar to Debussy's but represents an even more extreme denial of forward-looking time. By removing chordal distinctions and metric orders through use of additive rhythm and modes of rhythm, Messiaen's music insists that all moments are the same. His music is often tied to repeating pulses that reflect the stasis of eternal time.¹⁶

Messiaen's approach to time is an antecedent to Stockhausen's concept of moment form. Stockhausen avoids functional implications between moments, climaxes, and functional beginning and ending. Stockhausen's idea of time emphasizes every present moment which extends to a timeless eternity. It is an eternity that is present in every moment. Elliott Carter, on the other hand, opposed the discontinuity of moment time. He

¹⁶ Jonathan D. Kramer, The Time of Music (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 214.

insists that moments can only be understood in the context of relations from moment to moment.

This presentation of certain highly important new developments and concepts in the twentieth century is, by necessity, highly limited. Its purpose is to offer a background to the following discussion of *Eclogue*, the piano work by an American composer, Richard Wilson.

CHAPTER II

RICHARD WILSON AND HIS WORKS

Richard Wilson, American composer, pianist and music teacher, was born in Cleveland on May 15, 1941. He studied piano with Roslyn Pettibone, Egbert Fischer, and Leonard Shure, and cello with Robert Ripley and Ernst Silberstein in the Cleveland Music School Settlement. After beginning composition studies with Roslyn Pettibone and Howard Whittaker, he continued his studies at Harvard from 1959 with Randall Thompson, G. W. Woodworth, and Robert Moevs.

Wilson came to know the professor Robert Moevs in the freshman theory class. In his senior year at Harvard, Moves was his principal composition teacher, and had a decisive influence on Wilson's compositional career. One of the compositions written during his Harvard years—*Suite for five players* (1963)—received the George Arthur Knight Prize in composition. Wilson graduated from Harvard in 1963, magna cum laude in music and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. That year he received the Frank Huntington Beebe award for study in Europe. He studied piano in Munich with Fredrich Wuhrer and composition in the American Academy in Rome, again with Robert Moevs. Wilson continued to study with Moevs at Rutgers where he completed his master's degree in theory and composition. His master's thesis composition was entitled *Fantasy and Variations for Chamber Ensemble* (1965).

In 1966, Richard Wilson joined the faculty of Vassar College and has taught courses in harmony, advanced harmony, instrumental resources, composition, tonal counterpoint,

modal counterpoint, music literature and appreciation, and basic musicianship. In Spring 1992 and Spring 1993 he participated in a team-taught multidisciplinary program entitled the College Course. In 1989, he was appointed to a three year term on the visiting committee in the Harvard Music Department and was a member of visiting committee in the department of music at Wellesley College in Spring, 1992. He has served three times as Chair of the Department of Music at Vassar, where he has been Mary Conover Mellon Professor of Music since 1988.

An excellent pianist, Wilson has been active on the concert stage. His performances of Mozart Concertos and Brahms chamber music were said to “evinced the same telling blend of delicacy and understated intellectual strength as his own music.”¹⁷

Richard Wilson’s compositional output comprises some 70 works, ranging from instrumental solo to full orchestra. His music has reached a wide mark with commissions from the American Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony and other organizations. His most recently commissioned work is the *Concerto for French Horn, Bass Clarinet, and Marimba*, which was authorized by the Koussevitzky Foundation and first performed by the American Symphony Orchestra at Lincoln Center on March 17, 1999. Other important commissions include the *String Quartet No.3* (1982), by the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation for the Muir Quartet, and the orchestral work, *Articulations*, commissioned and premiered by the San Francisco Symphony in 1989. Wilson has also served as composer in residence with the American Symphony Orchestra since 1992.

¹⁷ Bernard Jacobson, “Richard Wilson and His Music,” www.peermusic.com/classical/wilsonessay.htm

Performers and ensembles who have played Mr. Wilson's music include Dawn Upshaw, Harvey Sollberger, Ursula Oppens, Fred Sherry, Arthur Weisberg, Paul Sperry, Nancy Allen, Blanca Uribe, Todd Crow, David Burge, Irma Vallecillo, Thomas Warburton, Robert Black, Aleksei Takenouchi, Peter Vinograd, James Pellerite, Meyer Kupferman, Josef Genualdi, Pamela Jordon, the Muir Quartet, the Delme Quartet, the Composers Quartet, the Chicago Quartet, the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, the Goldman Band, the William Appling Singers, the Hudson Valley Philharmonic, the Hudson Valley Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, the Pro-Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston, the San Francisco Symphony, the London Philharmonic, and the Orquesta Sinfonica de Colombia.

Wilson's works have been performed in major halls in New York, Washington, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, San Francisco, London, Berlin, Frankfurt, Graz, Zurich, Milan, Stockholm, Leningrad, Tokyo, Bogota, and in various cities in Australia, as well as at the Aspen Music Festival, the Monday Evening Concerts in Los Angeles, and at many American colleges and universities. Twenty-nine of his compositions have been published by Boosey and Hawkes, Schirmer Inc., J. Fisher/Belwin Mills, Peer-Southern, C. F. Peters, Oxford Press and Peer Music. Recordings of his works can be found on the CRI, Albany, Ongaku, Newport Classic, Koch International Classics, and Innova labels.

Wilson has been honored with numerous awards for his compositional achievement. Wilson also has won ASCAP awards for professional distinction annually since 1970. The Walter Hinrichsen Award was given to Wilson in 1986 by the American Academy/Institute of Arts and Letters. In 1988, Wilson was awarded the Cleveland Arts

Prize for Creative Achievement in Music. Under the Guggenheim Fellowship received in 1992, he composed his first opera, *Æthelred the Unready*, for which he wrote his own libretto. He was awarded the Elise L. Stoecker Prize of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in 1994 for his accomplishment in the area of chamber music composition.

Wilson's creative career shows a consistent growth in the public horizon.¹⁸ By the end of 1982, his works included vocal works, instrumental pieces and two orchestral works. Since then Wilson has composed as many as eleven works for orchestra, including two symphonies (1984 and 1986), two solo concertos (1983 and 1991, for bassoon and for piano respectively), and the recent *Triple Concerto for French Horn, Bass Clarinet, and Marimba* (1999).

Wilson has written three substantial piano solo works, *Eclogue* (1974), *Fixations* (1985), and *Intercalations* (1986). *Eclogue* is a one-movement work. *Fixations* consists of three movements entitled "Bird in Space," "Shadowings," and "Flashback". It was written for his Vassar colleague Blanca Uribe and published by Southern Music. Wilson endeavored to capture the incipient state of the composer's mind at work in *Fixations*, as the meaning of the title has become a metaphor for the compositional process. The music is full of fleeting, shimmering qualities and some of the writing is similar to *Eclogue*. His other larger-scale work for piano, *Intercalations*, was a result of a commission from pianist Margaret Mills, a Vassar alumna. It is also published by Southern music. *Intercalations* contains four pieces. Each piece can be related to a traditional keyboard

¹⁸ Ibid., 1-2.

model. The first one, “Interspace,” bears characteristics of a Baroque contrapuntal fugue. The second piece, “Interplay,” resembles a virtuosic toccata with perpetual motion. The third piece, “Interlacing,” is a lyrical song, while the fourth one, “Interaction,” orchestral in style, is like a narrative of an orchestral ballade or tone poem.¹⁹ In addition, Wilson also composed two smaller collections of pieces, entitled *Sour Flowers* (1979) and *A Child’s London* (1984). They are both didactic works.

¹⁹ Richard Wilson, Intercalations, (New York: Southern Music Publishing Co., Inc.), 1986.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF ECLOGUE

Introduction

Eclogue was written for and dedicated to Blanca Uribe, Wilson's colleague at Vassar. She gave the premiere of *Eclogue* in November 1974 at Vassar College, and her recording of *Eclogue* is available on CRI records. *Eclogue* attained public attention by winning the International Piano Music Competition sponsored by the League of Composers-International Society for Contemporary Music (U.S. Section) in February, 1976, and the Burge-Eastman prize for piano composition in 1978.

The eclogue, a poetic form with a pastoral feeling, was used as early as the 3rd century B.C. by Theocritus and later also by Virgil. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the eclogue took a dramatic form and was firmly established in European literature. It was a Czech composer—Václav Jan Krtitel Tomášek— who was the first one to apply this term to piano pieces. He wrote seven sets of eclogues, Op.35 of 1807 being the earliest. Most of these pieces are in binary form and make use of dialogue techniques. Other piano pieces entitled “Eclogue” or “Egloge” include Franck's Op. 3 (1842), Liszt's from the Swiss volume of *Années de pèlerinage* (1836), Dvorák's Op.52 no.4 (1880), and four others from the same year, published posthumously, Vitězslav Novák's op.11, 1986 and Egon Wellesz's Op. 11, 1913.²⁰ Wilson chose this title with descriptive music in

²⁰ Maurice J. E. Brown, “Eclogue,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), V, 827-828.

mind. The music sometimes suggests violent activities in nature, and at other times it evokes shimmering, lush landscapes.²¹

Richard Wilson's *Eclogue*, described by the composer himself as “ a celebration of the traditional resources of the piano, both the kinds of the sound it is capable of producing and the variety of styles of playing that its vast literature reveals,” bears traces of pianistic treasures of the past. Wilson has been very aware of musical culture. He again expressed this fondness for tradition when he composed his piano concerto in 1991. He frankly specified influences from great piano concertos, such as Beethoven's Fourth, Liszt's in E-flat, Schumann's in A minor, and Brahms' in D minor.²² The language of *Eclogue* reveals tendencies of the Expressionists and Impressionists. The Expressionist manner can be seen in his highly chromatic and contrapuntal writing, while the atmospheric sonorous effects and washes of tonal color suggest Impressionism. Wilson's musical language is rooted in traditional harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, and textural usage, yet possesses the personal qualities that make his compositions original and compelling.

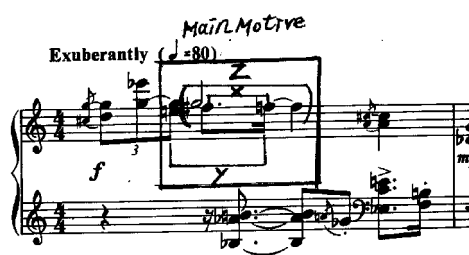
²¹ Mary L. Frantz, *Richard Wilson: The Solo Piano Works, 1974-1986*, (D.M.A. dissertation, The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1992; Ann Arbor, Mich. : University Microfilms, 9218339), 29.

²² Richard Wilson, [http:// www.richardwilson.org](http://www.richardwilson.org)

Form

In early 1974, during the initial stage of composing *Eclogue*, Wilson original intention was to write a set of pieces. However, the first three of those eventually grew together to form a single tripartite structure.²³ The resulting sections are clearly defined as: A- mm.1-51, B- mm.52-165 and C- mm.166-193. The outer sections are considerably shorter than the middle section and can be regarded as an introduction and an epilogue, while the middle section constitutes the main body of the piece.

The introduction exhibits fluid contrapuntal motivic treatment. The main motive appears in measure 1. It can be divided into three submotives :



Example 21. Richard Wilson, *Eclogue*, main motive and three submotives, m. 1.

²³ Mary L. Frantz, 9.

Submotive x is a melodic falling second. Submotive y is a curving three-note melodic cell consisting of motive x approached from below by a previous note. Submotive z is submotive x with a second voice on top forming a minor second clash. These three cells permeate the first section both in their original form and in various guises of different intervals, different rhythms, and intervallic and rhythmic inversions. They are freely placed in this energetic and rhapsodic section. They also appear in vertical forms as a result of voice leading: characteristics of all three submotives are often combined in a short segment. Example 22, the opening 15 measures demonstrates frequent appearances of the submotives and their variants, as marked by appropriate symbols:

Exuberantly (♩ = 80) *Z*

The musical score consists of four systems of piano and voice parts. The piano part is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of ♩ = 80. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score includes various dynamic markings: *f* (forte), *mp* (mezzo-piano), *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *ff* (fortissimo). It also features performance instructions such as *cresc.* (crescendo) and *di - min - u - en - do* (diminuendo). The score is heavily annotated with technical markings: *X* and *Y* above notes, *Z* above groups of notes, and *X/Y* above triplets. Rhythmic values are indicated by numbers 3, 5, and 7 under notes or groups of notes. The voice part enters in the third system with the lyrics "di - min - u - en - do".



Example 22. *Eclogue*, analysis of motives in the introduction, mm. 1-15.

While the phrase structure in the introduction is ambiguous, nevertheless, several demarcation points are well defined. For example, in measures 6-7, a G is repeatedly heard until it settles down with a diminuendo and fermata followed by a quarter rest:



Example 23. *Eclogue*, mm. 6-7.

A similar gesture is made for demarcation in measures 23-25:



Example 24. *Eclogue*, mm. 23-25.

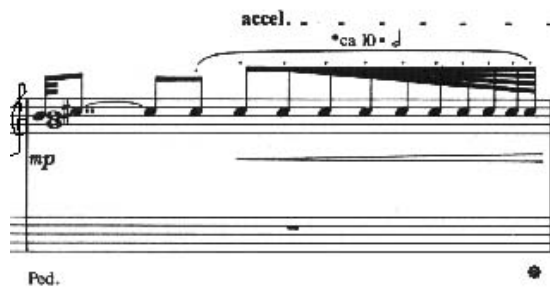
Other points include measures 32 and 51.

The middle section, the main body of the piece, is comprised of a prelude and a set of four connected textural variations. The prelude (measures 52-63) with its mysterious atmosphere in the low register, foretells the arrival of the variations; the opening repeated note phrase in the deep bass (measures 52-54) will give coherence through its later appearances (measures 133- 139):



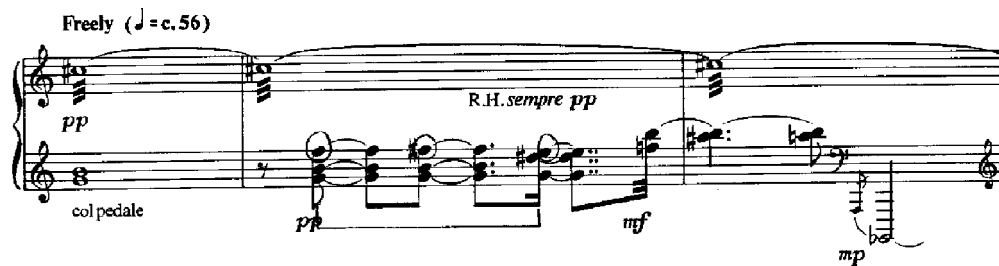
Example 25. *Eclogue*, beginning of the prelude to the variations, mm. 52-55.

In measure 60, the shimmering repeated notes that dominate the variations make their first appearance:



Example 26. *Eclogue*, m. 60.

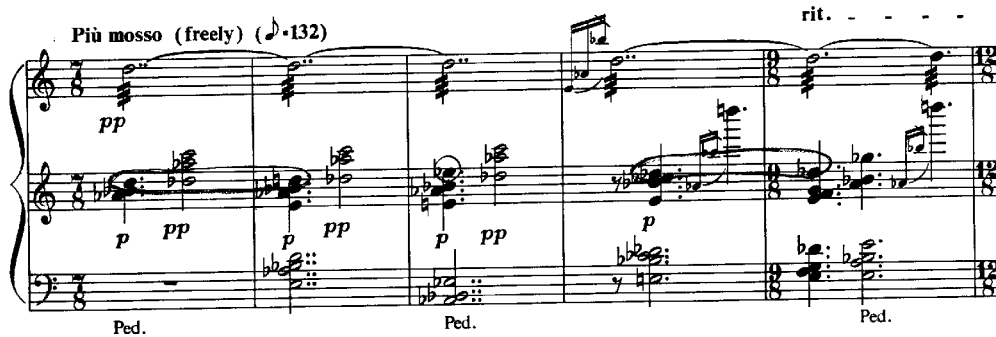
Each variation is based on a thematic figure, F-F#-E:



Example 27. *Eclogue*, thematic figure of variations, mm. 64-66.

This thematic figure is a retrograde of submotive y. It forms the basis of the chords played against repeated notes and trills throughout variations I and II. The thematic figure is sometimes expanded to rise and fall a third (measures 70, 90-92, and 95-97),

and is sometimes transposed (as in measures 100-104, 105ff). For example, measures 100-104 show a transposition of the theme (D-Eb-Db) with a texture similar to that of the preceding measures. Hence, it can be considered a modulatory bridge to variation III:



Example 28. *Eclogue*, modulatory bridge to variation III, mm. 100-104.

In variation III, the arpeggio passages (measures 105-116) build into the climax of the piece (measures 125-132), where the music exhibits a thrilling “Scriabinesque” writing of repeated chords:

The musical score is divided into four systems, each featuring a piano (p) and organ (o) texture. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4.

- System 1:** The piano part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a mezzo-forte (*mf*) section. The organ part enters with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. Pedaling instructions (*Ped.*) are present for both parts.
- System 2:** The piano part continues with a crescendo (*cresc.*) leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) section. The organ part features a mezzo-forte (*mf*) section. Pedaling instructions (*Ped.*) are present for both parts.
- System 3:** The piano part features a fortissimo (*fff*) section, followed by a piano (*pp*) section. The organ part features a mezzo-forte (*mf*) section. Pedaling instructions (*Ped.*) are present for both parts.
- System 4:** The piano part features a fortissimo (*fff*) section, followed by a piano (*pp*) section. The organ part features a mezzo-forte (*mf*) section. Pedaling instructions (*Ped.*) are present for both parts.

Additional markings include *sub. p* (subito piano), *5* (quint), *7* (septima), *8* (octava), and *(come sopra)* (as above).

Example 29. *Eclogue*, climax of the piece, mm. 125-132.

This is followed in measure 133ff by a bridge recalling material of the deep bass line and the shimmering repeated notes from the prelude to the variations, and introducing the sound of the muted strings. This sound becomes the basis for Variation IV.

The musical score for Example 30, 'Eclogue', measures 133-139, is presented in three systems. The first system, labeled 'Meno Mosso (♩ = 60)', shows a bridge section with a deep bass line and shimmering repeated notes. It includes a handwritten note 'strings muted by hands' and a dynamic marking 'f'. The second system continues the bridge, featuring a 'poco f' dynamic and a 'Ped.' marking. The third system concludes the bridge with a 'gliss. over strings (fingernail)' instruction and a 'pp' dynamic. The score is written for piano and includes various performance instructions and dynamic markings.

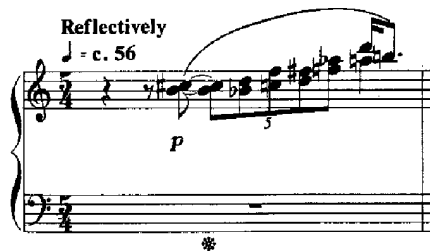
Example 30. *Eclogue*, bridge recalling material from the prelude to the variations, mm. 133-139.

The following figure illustrates aspects of the textural variations in the middle section; it is notable that the theme and the variations are all different in length.

	Theme	Var. I	Var. II	Bridge/ modulatory	Var. III	Bridge/ Recalling earlier material from prelude section of variations	Var. IV
Texture	Repeated notes with chords	Double trills with the theme in two voices	Repeated notes and embellishments with chords	Repeated notes with chords	Arpeggios/ Arpeggios with chords	Muted sound/ glissandi on strings	Muted sound
Measure #	64-78	78-84	85-99	100-104	105-132	133-139	140-165
Length/ measures	15	7	15	5	28	7	26

Figure 3. Outline of Variations.

The final section is derived from the introduction section in the use of texture and pitch material. Nevertheless, it is much less energetic, with more steady rhythms, and it is to be played “reflectively”. This section has its own motive: a wistful, rising arabesque in two parallel voices, stated in measure 166:



Example 31. *Eclogue*, beginning of epilogue, m. 166.

In addition, Wilson subtly links this epilogue with the previous sections by repeating some of the earlier gestures. The two-note slurred figure in measures 167, 174, 181, 184, 188 is a further reminiscence of measures 52-53 and measures 134, 135 and 137.

Another gesture is the figure which occurs on the pickup to measures 176, 178, and 185, is followed by a four-note cluster in the deepest bass (again reminiscent of measures 66-68, 133-141, and especially measures 139, 141, and 151), and then a gently expanding and contracting pianissimo figure in the highest register of the piano, suspended high above the bass cluster (measures 176-177, 178-180, 185-186).

Although *Eclogue* is traditional, its freedom of motivic treatment in the introduction and the textural manipulation and free placement of thematic material in the variations demonstrate some post-1950 aspects of compositional style. His process of structuring

this work is not through thematic development or extended melodies but through his choices of free pitch structure, ever changing texture, and dramatic use of timbre.

Harmonic language

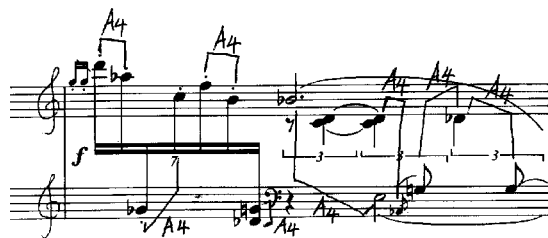
The harmonic language in *Eclogue* is an important element in the work's structure. Wilson's harmonic approach in this piece is rather free with regard to pitch choices. He utilizes certain intervals and chord qualities by which varieties of sound material are invented, and they are freely placed within the invented figurations and textures. Although this technique is similar to the use of sets, the handling of all twelve chromatic tones in *Eclogue* is very intuitive and flexible, and it is by no means a serial composition.

In *Eclogue*, Wilson favors intervals such as major and minor seconds and their counterparts as well as the tritone. Example 32 shows extensive use of the augmented fourth, marked as A4, both in melodic and harmonic forms.



Example 32. *Eclogue*, mm. 1-3.

Another example of frequent use of augmented 4th can be seen in measure 8 :



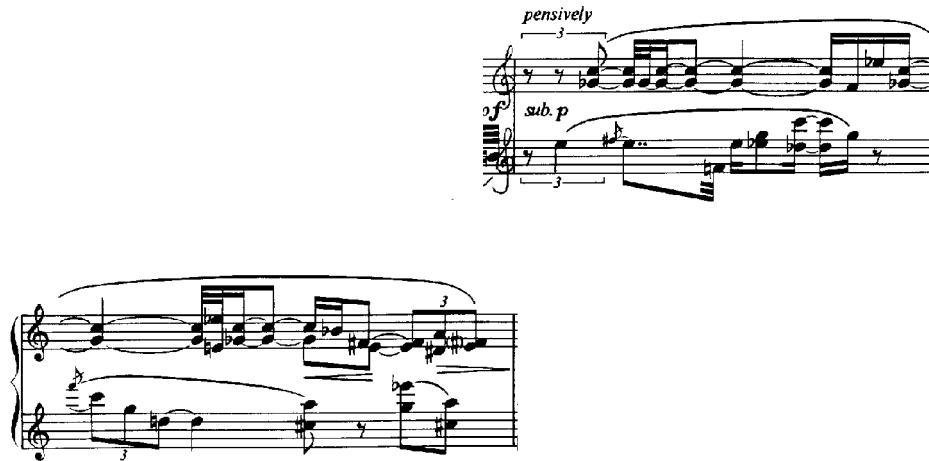
Example 33. *Eclogue*, m. 8.

Wilson exploits intervals of sevenths and seconds for their specific expressive power. Measures 10-12 feature many explosive consecutive major and minor sevenths (marked as M.7th and m.7th), both melodic and harmonic, distributed over a wide range. By contrast, the quieter parts (measure 11, beat 3, and measure 12, beats 1-2) are built of melodic minor seconds, with both hands playing together in an extremely narrow range.

The image shows a musical score for piano, measures 10-12 of 'Eclogue'. The score is written for piano and includes handwritten annotations. Measure 10 features a melodic major seventh (M.7th) and a harmonic major seventh (M.7th) marked with '3:4' and '6'. Measure 11 features a melodic minor seventh (m.7th) and a harmonic minor seventh (m.7th) marked with '6' and '3'. Measure 12 features a melodic minor second (m.2nd) and a harmonic minor second (m.2nd) marked with '6' and '3'. The score also includes dynamic markings such as f, mf, and p, and a crescendo (cresc.) marking.

Example 34. *Eclogue*, mm. 10-12.

The “pensive” mood in measures 16-17 is achieved by building these bars on more consonant intervals, and through repetition of pitches within a relatively small, fixed range:



Example 35. *Eclogue*, mm. 16-17.

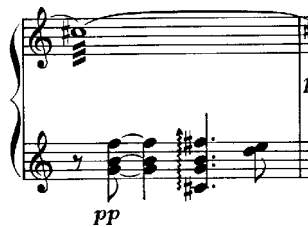
The three main pitches (E in the L.H., Gb and C in the R.H.), form a chord with the BNO of (0, 2, 6), which becomes very important in the prelude to the variations, and in the variation section itself. The long, hypnotic pedal tremolos and trills and the recurring thematic figure bring tonal anchors to the variations and create a tonal feeling in the music, in dramatic contrast to the introduction.

As mentioned above, the brief chromatic figure, F-F#-E, constitutes the theme of the variation section. This figure is also an upper voice of a series of chords; the chords are mostly four-note chords and have common tones, chief among them being the long pedal

point repeated notes and trills that forms the backbone of this section. The main three-chord group appears in measures 65 and 67:



Example 36. *Eclogue*, mm. 64-65.

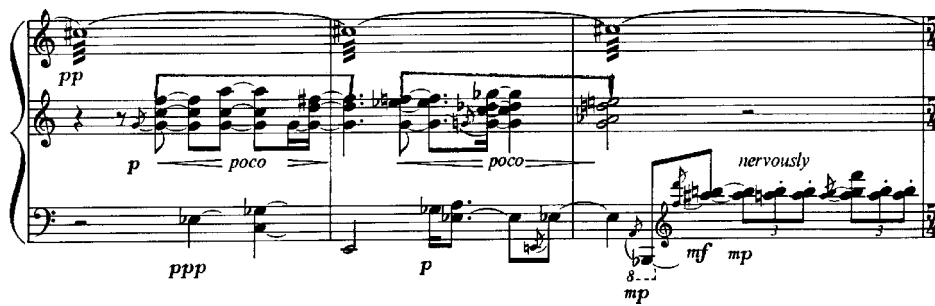


Example 37. *Eclogue*, m. 67.

All three chords share two common tones, the G on the bottom and the shimmering C#; the first two chords also share the B. These three notes, G-B-C#, create the basic characteristic sound of this section (see measures 49-51, 60-61, 64-68, 74, and a transposition at measure 100). The first chord in bar 64, G-B-C#-F, with the BNO (0,2,6,8), has the same interval content as the French sixth chord, though it is spelled with a seventh instead of an augmented sixth, and does not function as a French 6th chord. The

second chord raises the top note, G-B-C#-F# (0,2,6,7), while the third chord, G-C#-D#-E (0,2,3,6), parallels a modified diminished seventh. This chord usually appears with a D instead of a D#, G-C#-D-E (0,1,3,6) (see measures 67, 85, 92, 97, 103, 107, 118, 121, 126, 128, 130, 132, 157, 160, and 162), or in a related form constructed a tritone away, G-Ab-Bb-E (0,2,3,6) (see measures 89, 93, 98, 99, 104, 119, and 124.)

Once the theme has been stated twice in its original form (measures 65 and 67), it is presented twice in succession with two new groups of chords in measures 70-72:



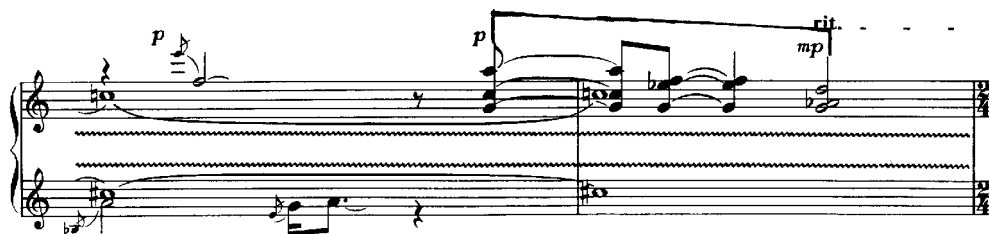
Example 38. *Eclogue*, mm. 70-72.

These two variants of the theme provide further harmonies that recur in the variations.

The statement in measure 70 is particularly important as it presents the theme rising and falling a third. The three chords in this first group, G-C-C#-F (0,1,5,7), G-C-C#-A (0,1,4,6), and G-C#-D-F# (0,1,5,6) are repeated *verbatim* in transposition down a minor 3rd with one arpeggiated chord per measure in measures 108-110, E-A-Bb-D (0,1,5,7), E-A-Bb-Gb (0,1,4,6), and E-Bb-Cb-Eb (0,1,5,6):

Example 39. *Eclogue*, mm. 108-110.

In measures 70-72, by taking the second chord from the first group, G-C-C \sharp -A (0,1,4,6), and the first and third chords from the second group, G-C \sharp -E \flat -F (0,2,4,6) and G-A \flat -C \sharp -D-E (0,1,3,6,7), Wilson subtly echoes these two measures in a condensed, fragmentary version in measure 84 (the third chord deletes the E). The repeated note C \sharp is replaced by chromatic cluster trills.



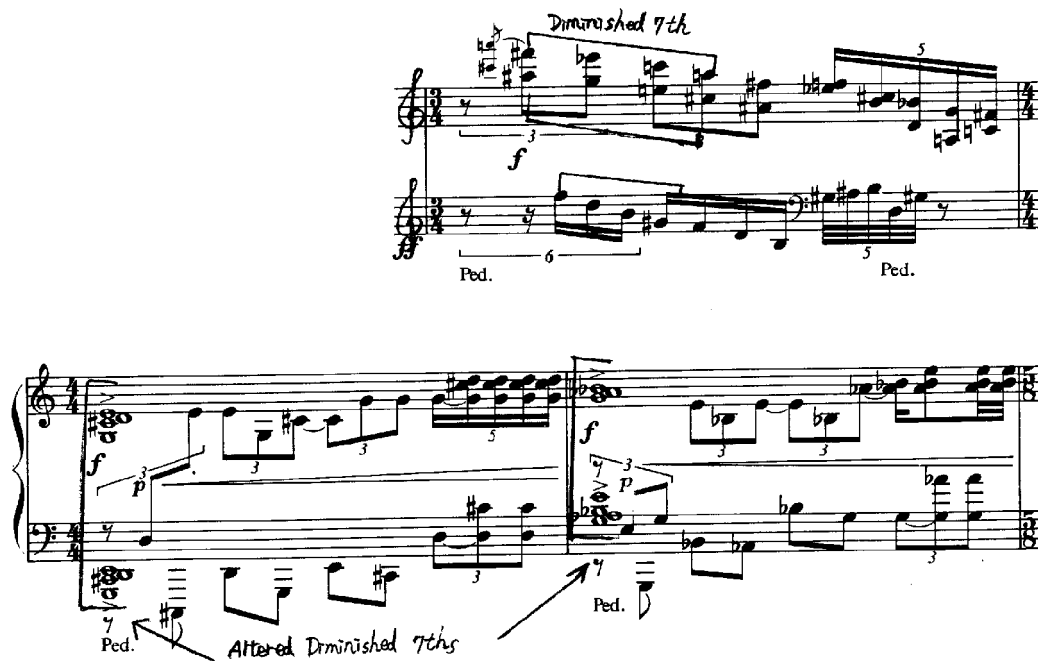
Example 40. *Eclogue*, mm. 83-84.

Another important element in this section is the descending melodic diminished seventh chord, first appearing in measures 74-75 (B-Ab-F-D):



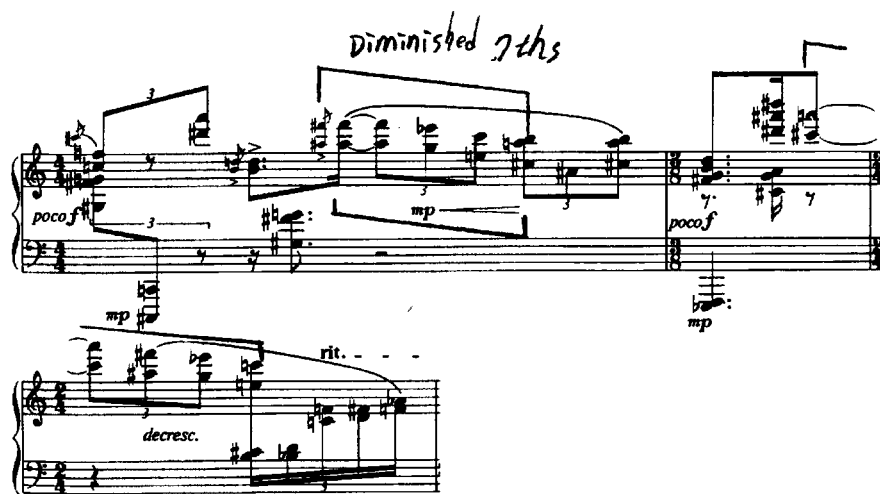
Example 41. *Eclogue*, mm. 74-75.

This secondary motive becomes important only later, at the climax in variation III, where it is associated with the altered diminished chords which dominate measures 117-132.



Example 42. *Eclogue*, mm. 117-119.

In measures 117 and 131, all three diminished collections appear at the same time, in three different layers, one above the other; the upper voice in the right hand descends through A-F#-Eb-C while lower voice adds C#-A#-G-E, and the left hand plays F-D-B-G#. The two upper voices play simultaneously, in minor sixths. This striking gesture also appears briefly in the epilogue, providing one more subtle link with the variations:



Example 43. *Eclogue*, mm. 168-170.

The harmony of the final section has some interesting traits. First, as has been noted, the harmonic material is less dissonant than that of the first section; the minor seconds have been replaced by major seconds, the major sevenths by minor sevenths, and thirds, fourths, and sixths abound. Second, in terms of harmonic progression this section is less static than the variations, yet not so restless as the opening section. There is a sense of harmonic movement and direction which one does not feel in the shifting kaleidoscopic variations, but it becomes more cadential than in the first section. Wilson achieves this feeling of coming to rest through repetition of certain gestures, and often through literal repetition of harmonies. For example, the opening rising figure in measure 166 is repeated exactly one octave lower in measure 170. The altered version of this figure, occurring on the second beat of measure 171, is transposed up a whole step in measure

187, and a whole step down in measure 191. The slurred double note figure on the third beat of measure 174 is repeated with the exact same pitches at the beginning of measure 188. The striking major second sonority which begins this section occurs so frequently as to become a fingerprint or signature of these final pages. See the following example:

Example 44. *Eclogue*, mm. 175-180.

Most importantly, the “closing” gesture is repeated numerous times, frequently with a minor third, F and Ab, in the right hand (measures 175-176, 177-178, 184-185, 192, & 193).

Wilson exploits chromaticism to provide intense direction in *Eclogue*. Although his use of chromaticism might be considered to be “Schoenbergian”²⁴, Wilson displays more freely-inflected chromatic movement.

²⁴ David Burge, 252.

Texture and Timbre

As discussed in the first chapter, texture and timbre in twentieth-century music play a significant role in shaping the composition, and *Eclogue* is no exception. In general, Wilson skillfully incorporates similar textures into the introduction and the epilogue. The variations, significantly, dwell on the kaleidoscope of textural changes. The extended techniques in *Eclogue* are used sparingly, but with most dramatic and memorable results. Wilson explored texture and timbre in *Eclogue* in a way that brings astounding extravagance and sophistication into the music.

The phenomenon of not being able to distinguish the right hand from the left hand, as mentioned earlier in connection with Webern, is seen frequently in the introduction. In addition, measures 1-7 manifest a texture in which both hands are moving up and down the keyboard in parallel directions, almost in a manner of hands chasing each other. Wilson also infuses these opening measures with drastic dynamic curves giving the music a rhapsodic character (example 22).

One of the most dominating textures in *Eclogue* is the two-voice texture in one hand with the voices playing the same rhythm. This particular usage of double notes with varied intervals is seen frequently in the introduction and in the epilogue; it also appears in the climax of the variations (example 41). Parallel motion is also present, especially in the epilogue.

Wilson's pianistic imagination abounds throughout the piece and the variations are particularly striking in this respect. Variation I features trills in the middle voices, while fragments of the theme appear in the outer voices. Wilson has indicated that the left hand

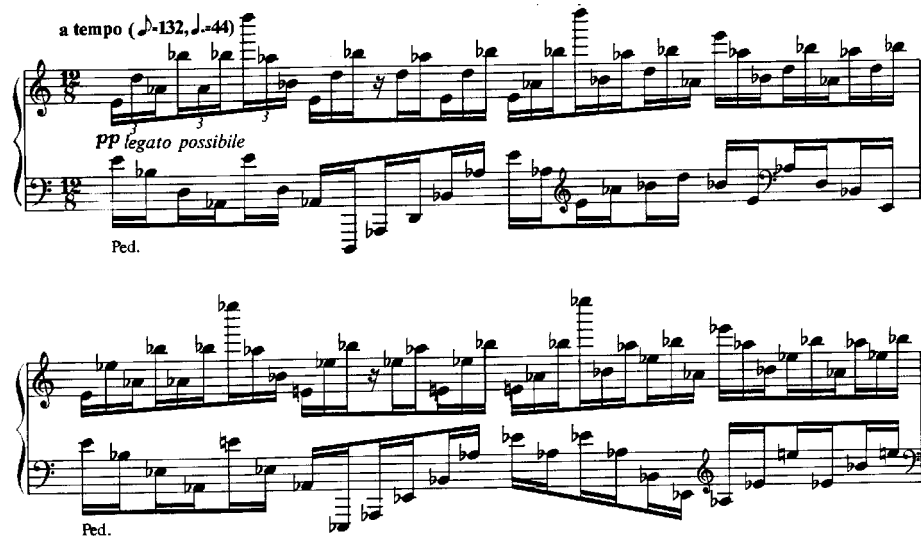
trill should continue from the asterisk at approximately the speed of the preceding quintuplets and must be slower than the right-hand trill which gives it a quasi-aleatoric coloring:



Example 45. *Eclogue*, beginning of variation I, mm. 78-81.

This remarkable texture with its quiet, hazy trills forming semitone cluster and flashes of thematic material, is reminiscent of Bartók's "Musiques Nocturnes" from *Out of Doors*.

In variation III, a wash of sound is presented by arpeggio figurations employing large intervals and *pp* legato with long pedals. This distinctive texture covers almost the entire span of the keyboard:



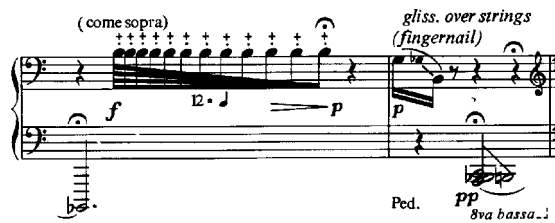
Example 46. *Eclogue*, beginning of variation III, mm. 105-106.

The dense texture of the climactic section in variation III is achieved through several means. Wilson combines the electrifying trill and the expanding half-note voices, along with the uneven rhythmic subdivisions covering a wide range, to produce a massed sonority:



Example 47. *Eclogue*, mm. 127-131.

He introduces two different timbres by using extended techniques in the transition to variation IV following the massed sonority of the climax section in the variation III. These are the notes marked with a cross, to be played with strings muted by hand, and the glissandi over the strings played with the fingernail. These two timbres resemble the sounds of a percussion instrument and of a harp. Wilson indicated in the preliminary remarks that these muted sound “must retain a measure of pitch, tone and resonance, and must not to be dryly percussive”:



Example 48. *Eclogue*, two timbres produced by extended techniques, mm. 138-139.

The entire variation IV is based on the sound of muted strings. From measure 146 onwards, Wilson incorporates the sound of muted strings that are reminiscent of the sound of a plucked guitar with the long-note unmuted sounds presenting the theme. This combination achieves a striking effect:



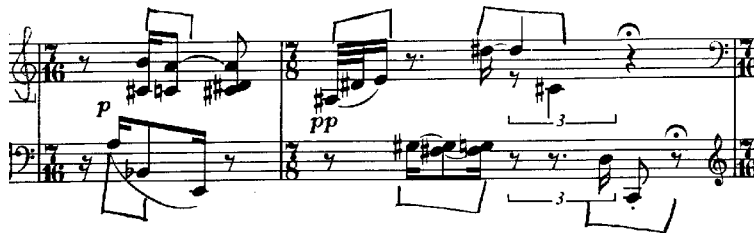
Example 49. *Eclogue*, mm. 146-148.

Rhythm and Time

The issue of rhythm in *Eclogue* has been mentioned several times in the earlier discussions of form, and of texture and timbre. Wilson, like many twentieth-century composers, wrote music with complex and irregular rhythms. The urge to free rhythm from its metrical implication is often present in this piece.

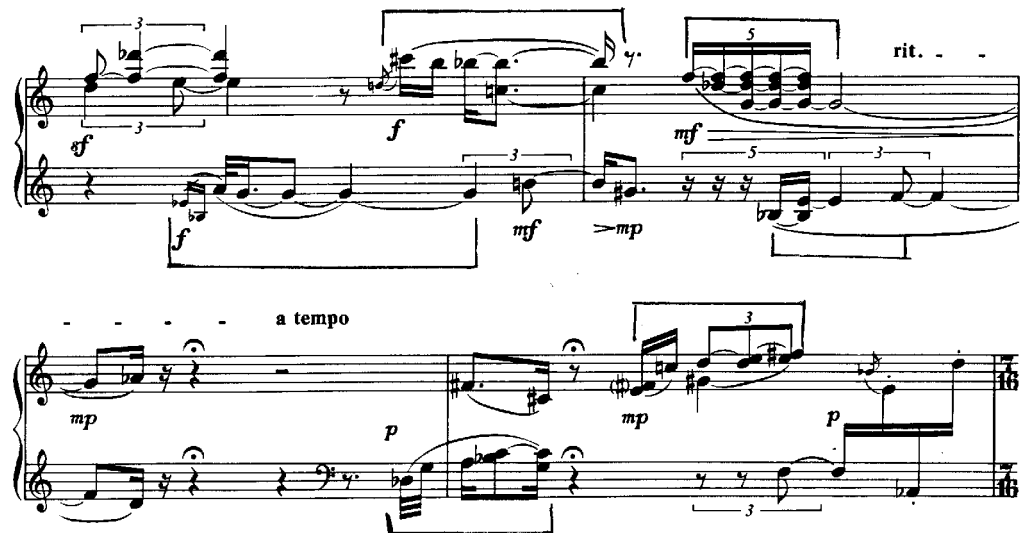
In general, the introduction section displays the most complex rhythm of the whole work. Wilson uses flexible subdivisions of beats, constant off-beat tied notes, and grace notes to attain this complexity. The feeling of pulse is present, but disguised. The basic meter in the introduction is mostly 4/4; several irregular meters are inserted, such as 7/16, 7/8, and 5/8 in measures 27-35.

Another feature of this section is the frequent close though approximate rhythmic imitation between hands, which further constitutes to the effect of rhythmic complexity:



Example 50. *Eclogue*, approximate rhythmic imitation, mm. 31-32.

Measures 23-26 are a typical example of approximate imitation between hands:



Example 51. *Eclogue*, approximate rhythmic imitation, mm. 23-26.

In measure 23, the figure in the left hand on the second beat is answered by the right hand on the third and fourth beats. In measure 24, the falling arpeggiation in the right hand is complemented by the rising arpeggiated left hand. Finally, the left hand figure on the first beat of measure 26 (with the pickup) is imitated after a tentative pause by the right hand on the second and third beats. Sometimes this sort of imitation is almost simultaneous, with the voices tumbling over each other in friendly play. In other cases, the imitation of gestures is more consecutive.

The irregular rhythms and phrase lengths in the introduction bring an energetic, dynamic character into the music, which contrasts greatly with the static quality of the variations.

In the variations, the general rhythm is much more stable, but the pulse is suspended through the irregular placement of events on the offbeats. In measure 65, the three chords of the theme are not placed squarely on beats one, two and three, but rather between the beats. This imparts a much greater sense of hesitancy, secrecy, and awe. Wilson placed the third chord slightly later, on the fourth sixteenth note of the third beat, destroying even the regularity of the offbeats and creating the unique static quality of this section right at the beginning. Wilson continues to suspend the pulse in variations I and II. It is only in variation III that the pulse is stronger through the use of regular arpeggio patterns and repeated figuration in the following climactic part. The final variation (Variation IV) reintroduces the hesitancy and the lack of regular pulse that dominates the variations, through the use of irregular meters (as in variation II) and liberal rubato.

The rhythm in the epilogue is more active again, as in the introduction. Here, however, the mood is much gentler, as there is a more regular pulse and smoother subdivisions of beats. The composite rhythm is simpler, because there is much less rhythmic conflict between different voices than in the introduction. There is also greater consistency of the patterns. For example, much of this section sways calmly in triplets (see especially measures 175-180, 182, and 185-186).

Other rhythmic patterns which recur with great frequency in the final section include the slurred melodic thirty-second notes (measures 167, 174, 181, 184, and 188) and the closing gesture (measures 175-176, 177-178, 180-181, 184-185, 192 and 193).

The epilogue section seems to combine the forward motion of the first section with the stasis of the variations. The predominant character is one of quiet, lyrical movement, but the closing gesture, halting the music with its long chord, its softly resonant bass cluster, and its high, circling pianissimo triplets (see example 44), brings the listener back to the static time of the variations.

CHAPTER IV

PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS

Learning and performing *Eclogue* is certainly a challenging project for a pianist. It is a piece requiring sensitive tonal control and intricate finger work, especially for the long tremolos and trills, and for the repeated notes. In addition, there are several essential issues a pianist will face, such as notation, rhythmic control, extended techniques, hands distribution, and pedaling.

Some of the most difficult spots in *Eclogue* include the *pp* tremolos in the beginning of the variation section in measures 64-77 (see example 27) and the following different-speed double trills in measures 78-84 (see example 44). These passages no doubt demand excellent technique to articulate *Eclogue*'s exquisite sound world. In variation II, the repeated-note figuration is also no small technical task for the pianist:



Example 52. *Eclogue*, beginning of variation II, m. 85.

Wilson uses some modern notation to express the rhythm in *Eclogue*. The notation of diverging beams for acceleration is seen the first time in the prelude to the variations in measure 60 (see example 26). Along with the acceleration symbol, Wilson also uses a deceleration symbol indicated by converging beams on several occasions in the variation section. They always appear in repeated notes and usually in a single unaccompanied voice, except in measure 94, where a decelerating figure in the left hand is playing against the triplets in thirty seconds in the right hand. This produces very difficult rhythmic coordination problem for a performer. See the following example :



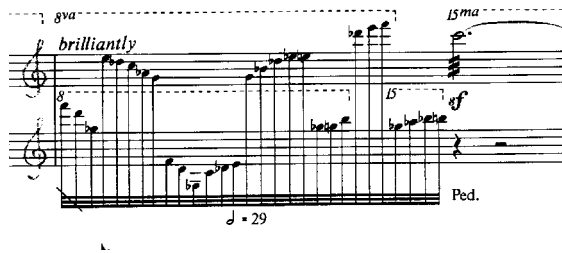
Example 53. *Eclogue*, mm. 94.

Wilson indicated where that the number of notes given in all accelerating and decelerating repeated-note figures is approximate.

Rhythmic control in *Eclogue* is quite taxing for a performer. The implication of accents that barlines suggest in traditional music is often missing. In fact, Wilson's original notation of measures 50-106 was unmetered. The revision which added barlines to this section was inspired by several pre-publication performances of *Eclogue* between 1974 and 1979 by pianists David Burge, Blanca Uribe, Irma Vallecillo, and Robert

Black. The published version with barlines gives a clearer rhythmic framework for the performer.

Wilson utilizes smaller noteheads for running figuration in a number of places (see measures 61, 68, 73 and 115). These cadenza-like figures are to be played at great speed, although the actual value for the entire group is given by Wilson. The notes in these figures are clearly distributed for both hands, as in the following example from measure 115:



Example 54. *Eclogue*, m. 115.

There are difficult spots calling for scrutiny with regard to distribution for the hands. In the transition after Variation III and in Variation IV, the use of extended techniques (mute and glissandi over strings) complicates the situation for the hand arrangement. In the preliminary remarks, Wilson indicated that the hand distribution for this muted part is up to the player's discretion. The notation suggests a practical solution, using the left hand inside the piano to mute the strings, while the right hand plays the keyboard and the glissandi over the strings:

(come sopra)
f
12. J
p
gliss. over strings
(fingernail)
p
Ped.
pp
8va bassa...
Tentatively
(♩ = 132) accel. - - rit.
mp
pp

Meno Mosso (♩ = 60)
gliss. over strings
(fingernail)
p
mf
12. J
pp
8va bassa...

Example 55. *Eclogue*, mm. 138-141.

It is quite convenient to play the rest of the section using the same arrangement for the hands:

sub. mf (come sopra)
pp
12. J
rit. - freely
pp
p
9. J
cresc. poco
mp
p
f
Ped.

Example 56. *Eclogue*, mm. 158-165.

The multiple uses of pedal in *Eclogue* bring richness and variety to the music. Wilson provides many suggestions for pedaling. In three places, Wilson indicates a general sign, *col pedale*, suggesting the use of pedal without giving specific details for pedal changes. They occur in the parts with sustaining long-note values which require more resonance and subtler changes. In measures 49-51 (see example 24), in which *col pedale* is indicated, no pedal change is a good solution for a resonant result. The other two places, the theme of the variations and Variation IV, need frequent shifting of the pedal. In the preliminary remarks, Wilson clarifies that when the abbreviation, ‘ped.’ appears without a rosette, it indicates a partial clearing. Wilson uses the rosette when calling for a complete clearing of the pedal. This is seen in measures 60-61, showing that the running figuration should be played without pedal:

Example 57. *Eclogue*, mm. 60-61.

In measures 165-166, the use of the pedal provides the connection between the variations and the epilogue:

Reflectively
♩ = c. 56
p
Ped.

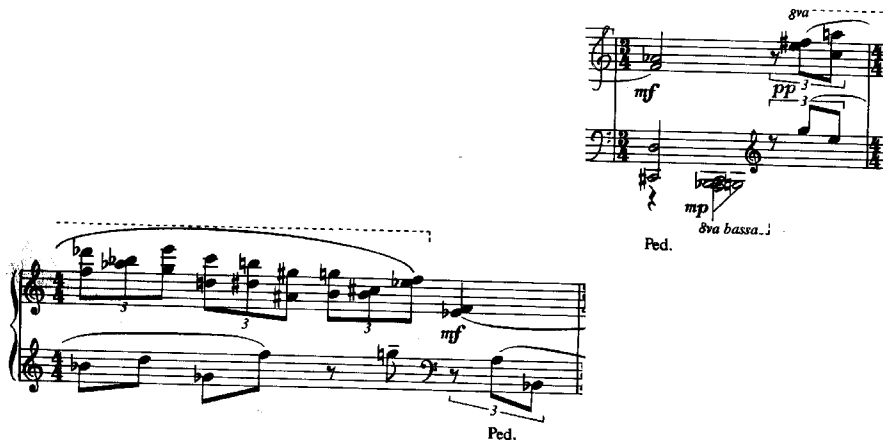
Example 58. *Eclogue*, mm. 165-166.

In measure 171, a specific use of pedal is seen; Wilson notates that the pedal should be cleared for two groups of notes:

- - - accel. - - a tempo
p
Ped. 5
Ped.

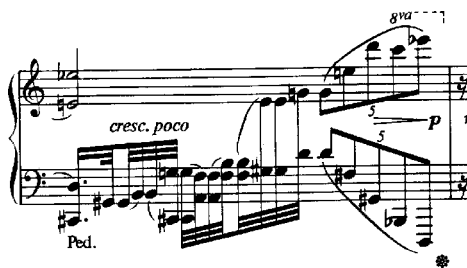
Example 59. *Eclogue*, mm. 171.

Long pedal indications are indicated numerous times in the epilogue. A wonderful wash of sound blending the two extreme registers into a harmonious glow is achieved by the long pedal effect, as seen in the following example:



Example 60. *Eclogue*, mm. 176-177.

In measure 181, Wilson suggests that the whole measure be pedaled for a *poco crescendo* followed by a complete release of the pedal:



Example 61. *Eclogue*, m. 181.

In the final two measures, the extreme registers in soft dynamics resound in the long pedal for an enchanting closure:

The musical score consists of two measures. The first measure is marked *p* (piano) and the second measure is marked *pp* (pianissimo). Both measures feature a long pedal point in the bass register, indicated by the text "8va bassa..." and a double bar line. The melody in the right hand is composed of chords and single notes, with a final note in the second measure marked with an asterisk (*). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Example 62. *Eclogue*, mm. 192-193.

CONCLUSION

Analyzing and working on *Eclogue* is a very inspiring experience, full of discovery. The aim of examining Richard Wilson's musical language in *Eclogue* from a historical perspective is not purely a matter of seeing what is old or new, but also how remarkably his absorption of previous resources is turned into a personal piece of work.

Formally speaking, *Eclogue* displays the most traditional gestures in forming a three-part structure: that of placing a climax after the center of the piece (in the variations), and that of concluding with previous material (in the epilogue). Harmonically speaking, Wilson maintains coherence while being spontaneous. In the variations of *Eclogue*, Wilson creates possibilities of texture resulting in fantastic sounds and sonorities through his ingenious command of the instrument. Wilson's affection for details is perhaps best exemplified in his use of rhythm, although his care and subtlety can be seen in all aspects discussed. The sense of continuity of time is generally strong in *Eclogue* through his extensive use of dynamic rhythms and of highly chromatic voice-leading.

Wilson's motivic treatment, both rhythmic and melodic, not only holds importance for the individual characteristics of each section, but also lends integration to all three sections. His exploration of the motives is copious and essential to the process of this work.

Wilson uses modern notation and extended techniques sparingly with great imagination. Interestingly, Wilson has not used any modern notation or extended technique in his later piano compositions.

Performing *Eclogue* requires strong discipline in tonal and rhythmic control, and advanced technique. This piece encompasses diverse changes of mood and of states of minds, and these are also challenging for a pianist. The careful examination of Wilson's markings and indications for pedal is a crucial key to a satisfying performance of this work. David Burge remarked, "If there must be a 'standard repertoire' *Eclogue* should be part of it."²⁵ Truly, this beautiful work is a treasure of its time. It is a fantastic addition to twentieth-century piano repertoire and a genuine gift to pianists from the composer.

²⁵ David Burge, "Contemporary Piano" in Contemporary Keyboard, (November, 1979), 75.

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E-Mail Correspondence

From Richard Wilson to Ping-Ting Lan, Feb, 19 & 23, 1999.

Web Sites

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- <http://www.peermusic.com/classical/richardwilson.htm> □